



# 'The Phoenix' - Whitehouse News



"We Rise By Lifting Others"

November 2017

## Principal's Scribble...

Dear Parent,

October and November brought many exciting projects to our pupils:

**Shared Education Residential.** Our Shared Education project was monitored by E.T.I. The reporting inspector was extremely impressed. One particular strength was our work with families via our annual Shared Education residential. This term on the 15th November 22 families headed to Ballycastle for three fantastic days.

### 'Operation Blue' - Anti-Bullying Week.

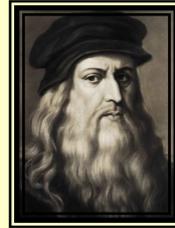
From the 20th to 24th November we held our annual anti-bullying project to prevent bullying and equip pupils to speak out. Each day pupils attended an assembly and then followed up the learning in class.

**'New Year, New You 2018'.** Our annual wellbeing week begins on the 8th January. A special flyer and letter will go home soon to inform you of what is planned and how you can get involved. Please return the permission form sent home as soon as possible.

Regards,

F. Bailie

i.m da Vinci/2019



This month we joined with schools in Finland, Italy, Spain, Ireland and our friends in St. James's Primary to begin a two-year Erasmus Project.

Our pupils in K.S.2 will be given the opportunity to embrace creativity via science, mathematics and I.C.T.

This project will bring our school over £20,000 of funding. More importantly, however, great opportunities for learning and perhaps even a new da Vinci!

## Open Night

We would like to remind you about our Open Night on **Wednesday 29th November from 5pm to 7pm**. It is intended for parents who have a child/children starting Nursery or/and Primary 1 in September 2018. You are welcome to bring your child, tour the nursery unit and Primary 1 and 2 classrooms. Please pass this information on to any friends who have children starting school or nursery in September. If you wish to apply on the night please **bring your child's birth certificate and a document showing proof of home address.**

"Learning to Live"

## Year 6C have been working very hard this term!

In Literacy, we have been learning about different types of nouns. We learned that abstract nouns name ideas or concepts. These are things that are hard to describe because we cannot feel them with our senses. We wrote abstract noun poems comparing these concepts and ideas to things we can feel with our senses.



### *Love* by Amber Higgins

Love is a piece to your puzzle.  
It smells like a fully grown rose.  
It tastes like a vanilla ice cream trickling down my throat.  
It sounds like birds chirping at the tip of a tree.

### *Wealth* by Noah Kelly

*Wealth is good and happy.  
It smells like money and power.  
It tastes like the turkey dinner you could buy with all your money.  
It sounds like people cheering because they won the lottery.  
It feels like the cold, hard metal of a pound coin.  
Wealth lives in Simon Cowell's mansion.*



In Maths, we have been trialing a new programme called, 'Learning by Questions'. Each person in year 6 has a tablet. Our teacher can set us different maths tasks to complete on the tablet by giving us a code to type into the app. We answer the questions on the app and the teacher can see on her screen how we are getting on.



*Questions for Learning is fun to do. It can also challenge you sometimes because there are lots of problem solving questions you have to think about.*

*Ben Gilmore*



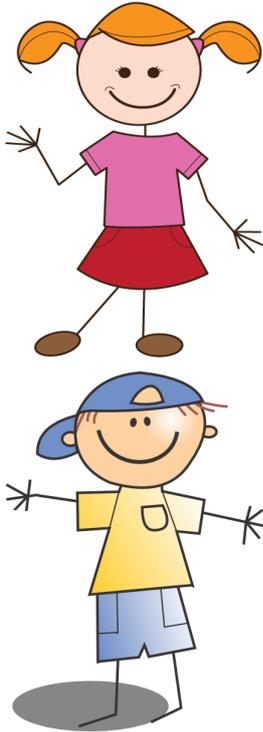
*Questions for Learning is great because you can find out straight away if you got the answer right.*  
*Annalaise Marshall*

*Questions for Learning is fun because we get to use a tablet to answer the questions. It is good to learn from different types of questions. There are some very tricky problem solving questions!*

*Chloe Nixon*



# Year 6H Bridge Project Work



We have been learning all about Rivers. We learned all about the Water Cycle and carried out a really cool experiment. I can tell you about the key features of a river. I really enjoyed writing a report on the Amazon River!

Brooke Johnston

I have enjoyed our topic work this term. I loved making our River Models which showed the key features of a river. Though, the best lesson was when we worked in groups to build a bridge out of spaghetti & marshmallows! It was lots of fun!

Lewis Thompson



## Roald Dahl Day

We had a fantastic day on Friday 27th October as we celebrated Roald Dahl Day.

Year 1 to 4 classes got involved in Roald Dahl art activities. Year 5 to 7 classes competed in an interactive Roald Dahl table quiz.

The outcome was that pupils learned more about a great writer and had lots of fun too.

*"If you are going to get anywhere in life you have to read a lot of books."*  
- Roald Dahl



## **'Step up for Pudsey' -**

**Children in Need Day**

**Friday 17th November**

As always, we like to participate in the annual Children in Need campaign. This year our school council have suggested a '**Crazy Sock Day**'.

Pupils were allowed to wear their trainers to school for the day but they also got to wear some creative coloured socks.

We were so impressed by the great display of colours and imagination. It was a super day and some teachers were able to incorporate the theme into their lessons.

As a school we were delighted to have raised over **£350** for this very worthwhile charity. In addition, we also supported the British Legion Poppy Campaign as well as our annual fitness charity day.

## 'New Year, New You'

**Mon. 8th - Fri. 12th January 2017**



Following on from the success of last year we look forward to bringing in the new year at Whitehouse in style. This will involve an array of activities aimed at encouraging healthy minds and bodies for 2018.

During the week we will offer fun and educational activities from nursery to Year 7. These will include activities to help develop:

- Self-Esteem;
- Respect for Others;
- Ambition and Aspirations;
- Mental & Physical Health;
- Good Decision-Making Skills.

Not only will this be highly educational but it will be lots of fun!

Some local organisations and businesses are supporting this week. The school are also investing funds into the project. We ask that all pupils donate **£3** with a maximum of **£6 for a family**. We would be grateful if this money could be brought in by Monday 4th December.

A booklet will be sent home soon outlining the plans for this January. A permission letter will also be provided.

# Blueprint 2020

September 2017/18 sees the fifth year of our dynamic six year school development strategy. This innovative and far ranging plan will bring our school to the next level in terms of learning and services to our community.

In this section we want to share some of our key strategic goals for the year ahead and then focus in on a few of the key innovations. Over the next year we will regularly report on what has been achieved and the new projects that we develop.

## Strategic Leadership

To share good practice across the school and beyond to enhance staff development and pupils' attainment. This will include the development and coaching of curriculum leaders;

The continued development of Shared Education with St. James's Primary School. In particular, this will allow the schools to promote S.T.E.M. and Forest School learning as well as achieving 'Rights Respecting Schools' status;

To engage with community stakeholders to increase aspirations, attainment, early intervention and collaboration. This will include focused family learning support interventions.

## Ethos

Implement and review a whole school wellbeing strategy;

Achieve the British Council's International School Award by June 2018;

Use the pursuit of the Eco Green Flag, by June 2019, as a means to educate our school community to be more eco friendly.

## Learning and Teaching

90+% of pupils, in both, Literacy and Numeracy will achieve as expected or above;

I.C.T. will more effectively enrich creativity, thinking skills and improve school management;

Review and update our P.D.M.U. provision.

## November Update:

The feedback from our **Shared Education monitoring visit from E.T.I. inspector** was **very affirming**. Here are a few highlights of the inspector's comments:

There is a definite **whole school vision** and approach to Shared Education.

There is a clear and strong sense of **strategic leadership** from the principals and coordinators.

There is evidence of high level **Governor communication and commitment**.

There is a **clear sense of togetherness** but also a **healthy recognition of the differences between the schools**.

There is **clear community impact** from the partnership. Outcomes from the parents and pupils are that **attitudes towards cultural diversity are very positive**.

Working with **parents at STEM nights** is another clear strength.

The **three strands** of S.T.E.M., Forest Schools & R.R.S.A. are clear areas of focus.

An innovative and determined approach to innovation is evident.

The S.L.T. focus on **ensuring quality provision and outcomes is commendable**.

**Conclusion:** The partnership was **congratulated** on its successes. It was stated clearly that there is **much to be proud of and share**. **Capacity for self-evaluation was another area of strength**.

\*This is not a formal report but the principal's summary of the feedback.

## Pastoral Care Family SMILE Night



On Wednesday 11th October over 150 pupils and parents came along to watch a fantastic presentation of '**The Hunchback**'.

While the pupils were enjoying the production we spent valuable time working with and consulting with parents on our pastoral care policies.

This included a focus on the Relationships and Sexuality Policy. Mr. Bailie made a presentation on the school's approach to this key pastoral area. Parents were then invited to ask questions and provide some feedback.

The school was delighted by the feedback from parents. There was an extremely high level of satisfaction in the work of the school.

The parents also attended the school's P.T.A. annual general meeting. The school was pleased that new parents volunteered to join the P.T.A.

Miss Blain, Chair of the P.T.A., congratulated the committee on their excellent work. She also thanked a number of members who had come to the end of their service (their children had moved to post primary school).

It was a great night of fun but it was also very useful in gather parents' opinions and ideas.

## A Huge Thank You



I would like to thank all our parents for the generous support for our annual Charity Fitness Day in October.

I am delighted to confirm that we raised over £4,000! This means that we will be able to send money to our three nominated charities.

The remaining money will go to school funds to help support pupils' learning during the year ahead.

## 'Keep Connected!'

If you have a computer or/and smart phone save our website to your favourites:  
[www.whitehouseps.co.uk](http://www.whitehouseps.co.uk)

In addition please download the app **Schools NI**. Then go to **Antrim** and select our school.

By having this app you will be able to see our latest news (including photographs), view our calendar and read all recent letters that have gone home.

We are hoping to develop our e-services in a number of ways in the coming few terms:

- ◆ We would like to increase our app use to above 90%;
- ◆ In addition, to encourage more parents to sign up for emails so we can reduce our use of paper;
- ◆ We would hope to explore the use of an electronic payment system. We intend to send out an audit to assess if parents would be willing to sign up.

## Talking Points: Attendance

Every month we would like to share an educational issue with our families. The need for parents and teachers to be on the 'same page' is so important to help our pupils reach their full potential. My hope is that parents would find this information useful and thought provoking. We are also very keen for parents to respond with their comments to us. Your comments can be sent to Mr Bailie (wbailie552@c2kni.net).

This month we want to discuss the importance of high attendance. This year so far we have a very pleasing level of attendance. At present we have a 97.5% attendance rate.

Here are some facts and research about the link between attendance and achievement:

- 1 A child who is absent **a day of school per week** misses an equivalent of **two years of their school life**;
- 2 Research shows that **missing 10 percent** of the school negatively affects pupils' performance;
- 3 Poor attendance can **influence whether children read proficiently** by the end of Year 5;
- 4 90% of young people with absence rates below **85% fail to achieve five or more good grades of GCSE** and around **one third achieve no GCSEs at all**;
- 5 Poor examination results limit young people's options and **poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable**.

As a school we do not apologise for expecting high standards and challenging poor attendance. You can see from the research how important high attendance is for pupils' learning.

As a school we would strive for a 97% end of year attendance level. For each pupil **95% would be considered only satisfactory** (no more than 8 days off per year.)

We need to stress, however, that we accept there are very genuine cases when a child is ill or there are extraordinary circumstances when a child's attendance will be below 95%. **If this is the case then we as a school are very understanding and supportive.**

If your child's attendance falls below 90% you will be contacted and an intervention is likely to be applied. This can involve a tracking process and even the involvement of an Educational Welfare Officer.

A worrying issue is families taking **holidays during term time**. It is unfair on your child, disruptive for other pupils in the class (time taken to help your child/children catch up) and difficult for already very hard working teachers. Please try to avoid these holidays!

# Diary Dates

## NOVEMBER

**20th** - 'Operation Blue' Anti-Bullying Week.

**28th** - Year 5 'Pizza & Read Night' (6pm)

**28th** - Milk Order for Term 2 issued.

**29th** - Open Night for new Nursery & Year 1 pupils for Sept. 2018 from 5pm to 7pm.

## DECEMBER

**1st** - 'God in Skin' - The first in a series of four assemblies about the Christmas story.

**4th to 7th** - Year 7 Residential at Bushmills

**12th** - Foundation Stage Nativity @10am

**13th** - Key Stage 1 Nativity @ 10am

**13th** - Pupils' Christmas Dinner - see attached menu. Please order on Monday 11th.

**18th** - Nursery Nativities at 9.30/10.30am

**19th** - K.S.2 Carol Service in Newtownabbey Mission at 10am.

**19th** - P.T.A. Disco during the day. This a non-uniform day.

**20th - Christmas Holidays begin!** Non-uniform day (£1 donation). Early closure 12noon Nursery to Y.4 (with older siblings) then at 12.15pm K.S.2. No lunches.

## JANUARY

- **Term begins on Monday 8th January** - 'New Year, New You' Week.
- **9th** - Parent Internet Safety course at 2pm.
- **11th** - Y.6 & 7 'Love for Life' Parent Workshop. Please plan to attend!

# Pastoral Care Team



Pupils' safety and care is our first priority. If you have any concerns we have a team of staff who are trained to support pupils and families. This team focuses on both child protection and wider pastoral support.

**Team Leader:** Mrs R. Watson

Mrs Clifford (Early Years)

Mrs Spratt (Nursery)

## Family Residential

On 15th November 11 children from Whitehouse went for a two night stay to Ballycastle. We travelled by coach and picked up children and parents from St. James on the way.

They had a wonderful time getting to know each other and were sad to leave.

Read the following comments from the children to find out more!

"I liked it when we got to dig up strawberry plants in the polytunnel." (Caitlin)

"I liked when we went to the beach. We built sandcastles and I got wet by a big wave, it was fun." (Katy)

"I liked when we got to play games with the Corrymeela volunteers. My favourite one was chain tag." (Corey)

"The songs were amazing!" (Emily)

"The hot chocolate was nice and we drank it down at the campfire. It was at night and I felt really warm and cosy." (Matthew)

"I'm glad I went because I got to play football with my new friends from St. James's." (Shaw)

A very big thank you to all the children and adults who made this a wonderful trip.

Have a look at our photos.